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*FROUDE; OR THE HISTORIAN AS PREACHER*

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We have had abundant evidence of late, if evidence were needed in the matter, that preaching is not of necessity confined to pulpits, nor a matter solely of the churches of the world. There are sermons which come from men of letters, as well as ministers, and from politicians who are genuine prophets. Whatever may be thought about the character of the sermons he delivers, and the nature of the texts from which he draws his inspiration, there can be no question of the fact that Theodore Roosevelt is essentially a preacher. His messages to Congress, which came with more than ministerial regularity and frequency, were essentially homiletical in form as well as hortatory in purpose, and his public addresses might well be collected under the Newmanesque title of *Political and Plain Sermons*.

In all of this there is nothing remarkable, unless it be in the fact that the individual chances to be a statesman and politician, instead of a poet, or a man of letters pure and simple. Most of us remember the question that Coleridge once put to his friend Charles Lamb, and the witty answer which he instantly received; but perhaps the repetition of it may be pardoned for the sake of those who have forgotten. "Charles," said the poet to his friend, referring to the days when he had been the minister of a Unitarian congregation,—“Charles, did you ever hear me preach?” “I never heard you do anything else,” was the ready although stuttering reply. The same might equally well be said of many another person who has either changed his profession or chosen from the first a wholly different calling. The man of letters, for example, is frequently a preacher. Carlyle was, who thundered and sent forth vivid lightnings against every form of folly and abuse that came beneath his eye. Abundant proof that the art critic and reformer often falls into the preaching habit is given

by Ruskin, who found a sermon in each stone of Venice, and a text in every letter of its long decay. The man of science indulges often in the art, and does it well, as Thomas Huxley made distinctly clear. Those of us who have visited the Wiertz Museum in Brussels, or remember Vereschagin's exhibition of his pictures, showing forth the horrors and barbarities of war, will be ready to confess that the artist also may be numbered in this class. And if men of letters, statesmen, scientists, and artists, with reformers generally, engage at times in a practice which is more especially the privilege of the minister and a function of the church, the same right may be broadly granted to one who has a clearer title to it than any of the others, and better reason for doing it both earnestly and well. I refer to the historian. In one sense it almost may be said that the historian is always preaching. He may not be aware of it himself, and he may endeavor to refrain from doing so; but the very facts which he marshals in his mind and sets down in his volumes insist on preaching for themselves. They prophesy above his head and without his leave. "History," as Dionysius long ago declared, "is philosophy teaching by example." It is hardly necessary to add that history is helped in this direction in some instances much more than in others, and, whether consciously or not, is often used to prove a point or illustrate some truth.

However all of this may be, I venture to call attention to a case in point where it was done with singular felicity and forcefulness, but with a generous freedom which has caused much misconception. There is perhaps no instance in modern times where the historian was at once so consummate and so constant, so brilliant and so bold a preacher as was Mr. Froude. In this fact alone I think, or at any rate in this fact chiefly, we discover the reason why he was often accused of carelessness and prejudice, and attacked for what he represented history as teaching. But before I go on to illustrate from his works themselves this homiletical or pulpit tendency, I wish to call attention to certain manifest and external features in the life and experience of Froude which serve upon the face of things to justify the point of view which I suggest.

There is reason enough to speak of Froude as a preacher when we remember that he belonged to a family of churchmen, and even

began life by taking orders himself. His father was rector of the church at Dartington in Devonshire and archdeacon of Totnes. He was a character in his way, this proud archdeacon, with a reputation of his own for clerical ability and worldly power. He combined in his person the authority of the churchman with the influence of the local magistrate and landholder, administering his church affairs on one day, and riding to hounds the next, the best mounted man in the field. He was a living prototype of Trollope's well-known character, Archdeacon Grantley in the "clerical series." It almost seems, indeed, that Trollope must have had in mind this Devon churchman when he drew the familiar portrait which stands out with such distinctness on the pages of *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers* and *The Last Chronicle of Barset*.

More important than the father, however, so far as early influence, lasting impression, and a guiding stimulus were concerned, was an elder brother,—the brilliant, the magnetic, the domineering, the conservative, the ascetic Hurrell Froude, who, though he died at thirty-three, left a deep mark upon the life and thought of the Church of England, leading up indeed to the great event in the middle of the 19th century which shook the Church to its very depths. Hurrell was the natural mentor of the youngest son of a large and memorable family, and he did not hesitate to make the fullest and completest use of the power which naturally belongs to an older brother. Moreover, the men who were his friends, and who became associated with him in the Oxford movement, were not without their influence. It was a very remarkable group which was gathered often at the rectory in Dartington, and the boy of twelve or fifteen years listened eagerly to the talk of Newman and Keble when they spent their holidays with his brother. The intimacy was close and confidential. Newman especially was a welcome visitor at the rectory, and he told the world in his *Letters and Correspondence* how one of his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* entitled "Scripture a Record of Human Sorrow" was suggested by the sight of blooming youth and high spirits in the Froude household which affected him suddenly with the thought of what changes were inevitably in store, and what hard discipline and trials.

When Anthony Froude went up to Oxford, therefore, he was naturally brought into close and very friendly touch with Newman. The influence of that great ecclesiastic could not fail to be distinct as well as deep. Froude followed naturally, though not without misgivings, the career marked out for him. Elected fellow of Exeter College after graduation, he took deacon's orders as was then required of all fellows, and he preached his first and only sermon proper in St. Mary's Church at Babbacombe, a few miles from his home at Dartington. Of the break that later came, of the abandonment of the clerical career, of the loss of belief, of the growth of heretical opinions and the publication of the *Nemesis of Faith*, a copy of which was publicly burned in the Hall of Exeter College, and of how he finally came to devote himself to history,—of things like these we need not speak. I have called attention to these scanty biographical details not only for the purpose of showing that Froude was from the first trained to be a preacher, but because the things he came in the end to preach through the medium of history were the very opposite of those which it was hoped that he would set forth as a churchman. In a rash and over-confident moment Hurrell Froude had told his younger brother that when Newman and Keble disagreed, then, but not till then, he might do his thinking for himself. What seemed to the young enthusiast utterly impossible in regard to his two most intimate friends was very soon to come to pass. To the astonishment and consternation of his followers and friends, Newman in 1845 slipped quietly into the Church of Rome, leaving Keble and the rest to pursue their way as rigid Church of England men. Before the unexpected actually came to pass, Anthony Froude had begun to claim his rights of independent thought, and, as often happens, there came about a strong reaction from the narrow tenets which had been impressed upon his mind. It was said of Macaulay that he wrote "his History to prove that God was always on the side of the Whigs." With an equal amount of truth, or untruth, it may be said that Froude wrote his glowing and dramatic History to prove that God was on the side of the Protestants.

The strength of his convictions, or, if you please, the vehemence of his prejudice, upon this point, is largely to be accounted for

by the way in which his beliefs took hold upon his mind. He had been trained to hold the very opposite position. To his older brother and his friends the Protestant Reformation, as it came to be worked out in England under Henry VIII, was a terrible and almost fatal error. They had no sympathy with the Puritan, none with the English martyrs in the time of Mary. "I am glad to know something of the Puritans," wrote Hurrell Froude to Keble upon one occasion, "as it gives me a greater right to hate Milton, and accounts for many of the things which disgusted me in his, not-in-my-sense-of-the-word, poetry. Also," he added, "I adore King Charles and Bishop Laud."

It was in such an atmosphere that the future author of *The History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada* was reared. When he began to think for himself, and read for himself, and finally to study and gather facts for himself, it was no wonder that he underwent a fierce reaction. What he came to see appeared all the more glorious and important, because he had worked his way onward toward it not without difficulty and not without pain and grievous misunderstandings and opposition. In dramatic contradiction, therefore, to what he had been brought up to believe, and had been urged by family and friends to preach in the pulpit, he set himself to proclaim in his History not the shame, but the endless glory, of the English Reformation; not the reasons for hating, but those for adoring, the Puritan; not the causes for believing that Henry VIII and Latimer and Cranmer were individuals to be reprobated and repented of, while Charles I and Laud were loved; but the very opposite of this,—namely, that Henry and his followers were the champions of English liberty and the actual saviours of the country. With the unerring eye of genius he chose for his theme the mighty drama when Protestant England under Henry and Elizabeth was clutched in a death-struggle with the Catholic forces, and from first to last we see the superior qualities of those who held to the Reformation position in religion. In the fight that goes on, the God of battles is on the side of the greater honesty and fervor of the Protestants and their devotion to truth and freedom. Froude himself has declared that Macaulay's unfairness to Cranmer, in the celebrated

review of Hallam's *Constitutional History*, first suggested to him the project of his work. It was thus for the purpose of contradicting falsehood, of setting the past in a truer light before his countrymen, and of saving them from the errors in which he had himself been trained, that he set to work.

Having chosen his theme and gathered with abundant pains and care a mass of original material, Froude claimed the right, which lately has been too often neglected,—partly perhaps because the spell of science rests upon our age, and partly because in large measure has the power itself been lost,—he claimed the right to make history interesting, and he believed that it was none the less true when interpreted and written as a drama. He called to his assistance the one great thing which he had gained of Newman and the Oriel atmosphere, a matchless style which never failed him, and which enabled him, as one of his fiercest and unfairest critics has confessed, when he came to certain central episodes, such as the sinking of Spain's great Armada, to rise "into a species of epic power."

"History and story," it has well been said, "are variations of the same word, and the historian who is a master of his art must be a story-teller." In this respect Froude was well calculated to meet the requirements of the "Gentle Reader," who claimed that history should be readable, and who described his feelings when he was set adrift on one of those bottomless seas of erudition called history, without human companionship, and only "writings, writings everywhere and not a page to read." The simple fact of the matter is that Froude did not write his histories merely to be referred to; he wrote them to be read. He did not design them to stand upon dusty book-shelves, but he prepared them for the hands of living men and women who wished to know about the past. To him the presentation of facts was almost as important as the facts themselves. And in this he was essentially Greek,—a lover of art as well as science, of beauty as well as accuracy. He was interested in history because of what it taught, and he was prejudiced enough to believe that it had many things to teach the coming generations. He was not warned off from his task, nor deterred from doing it well, by the modern claim "that history is a science and not a province

of literature; that the time has not yet come to draw any conclusions or to summarize any tendencies; that picturesque narrative is an offence against the spirit of truth." Far from it. He agreed rather with Professor Seeley, that "we do not so much want history explained after the manner of science as we want it portrayed and interpreted after the manner of literature." He believed, indeed, with a present-day historian of wide repute<sup>1</sup> that "the assembling of details is antiquarian; the truth of general effect alone is historical. To produce the latter is masterly; the former is mechanical investigation, and its reproduction for the laity misleads far more frequently than it guides." It is the business and the privilege of the historian, quite as much as it is the business and privilege of the preacher, to point a moral and adorn a tale; and the moral is not the less sound for being pointed gracefully and well, nor the tale less accurate and faithful for being draped in the adornment of splendid rhetoric and rich description. History is essentially a form of eloquence. It requires imagination; and it cannot make us understand until it makes us *see* things. In this respect Froude was essentially a master, and seldom if ever has he been surpassed in insight and power to depict the past. He belongs to the class of Prescott and of Parkman, of Motley and of Macaulay, men who have "displayed the romantic side of history, and have discovered the possibilities of language in rendering its records glowing and fascinating without departing from veracity." Nevertheless it was just because Froude knew and used the possibilities of the English language that he came to be so freely and frequently accused of departing from veracity.

Into the question of Froude's reliability, however, I have no wish, nor perhaps am I equipped, to enter. It ought to be said, however, that since the charges against him have been traced to their turbulent and angry source, the prejudices that once prevailed have tended silently to pass away. According to Edmund Gosse, in his *History of English Literature*,<sup>2</sup> Freeman, who was a firm high-churchman, could never forgive his brilliant

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Sloane, *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1908, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Short History of Modern English Literature*, p. 373.



rival for abandoning the party in the old Oxford days. He sat at his literary elbow like some gigantic Nemesis for more than thirty years, magnifying every fault, and exaggerating every error in his historical writings, though often falling into gross errors himself in the process. His criticisms for the most part were anonymous, but were always written with rancor and abuse. "Any stick," he once declared, "was good enough with which to belabor Froude." Freeman at his gentlest was never too refined, and at his harshest became insulting. He was introduced in public once as "the historian who has done so much to reveal to us the rude manners of our ancestors."

It must not be inferred from this, however, that Froude was free from errors, or beyond the range of criticism. He was a pioneer, and it has been truly said of him that "probably no previous historian has incorporated so much unpublished material in his work."<sup>3</sup> His authorities for the most part were in manuscript. They were written in five languages, and filled nine hundred volumes. The most precious of them were in the little village of Simancas in Spain, which he was the first to explore. He copied masses of documents which even a Spaniard would have found it difficult to read, and these copies were later given to the British Museum, where they may now be seen. I looked them through a few months since, and in the full witness they give to his industry they certainly disprove Green's description of him as an indolent man. I hold no brief for Froude's inerrancy, however, and I would not for a moment claim that he did not make mistakes, it may be serious ones. I assert, however, that his errors have been grievously exaggerated, and that the greatest of all historical writers, since history began, have not escaped a similar charge. Carlyle, for instance, was accused of misrepresenting events in the French Revolution, and all of us know how severely Bancroft suffered in the old days. Professor Sloane has called to mind an instance of the ill-deserved censure in the latter case. When New Jersey was erecting the battle monument at Trenton, and proposed on the authority of Bancroft's pages to inscribe on its base Lord George Germain's terse words about "that unhappy affair which has blasted all our hopes,"

<sup>3</sup> Dictionary of National Biography, Supplement, Vol. ii, p. 257.

it was a Boston historian who dryly remarked in a letter that this was "one of the things Bancroft thought ought to have been said, but there was no proof that it ever *was* said." The phrase so calmly dismissed as invention was promptly found by a friendly fellow-student of the historian in the pages of Parliamentary debates.

I can give a similar incident in regard to Froude, which will show at once how falsely he was sometimes judged, and how unfairly. Not long ago I was talking with a distinguished historical writer, who is also one of the most careful. The discussion turned on Froude, and he offered to give me an instance of his errors, inaccuracy and unscrupulous methods. In his sketch of *Cæsar*, he said, Froude tells us that after the battle of Pharsalia, Cæsar burned all Pompey's letters without reading them, not wishing to learn unpleasant things about his friends at home. "Now that statement," said my friend, "is a very interesting one; but there is absolutely no foundation for it. I have consulted Mommsen, and last year when I was in Rome I asked some learned men of my acquaintance if they could tell me Froude's authority. They could not, the fact being that he undoubtedly made it up out of whole cloth." As a matter of fact, however, I soon discovered the entire incident, set down as Froude related it, in the pages of Dio Cassius. My friend, to whom I wrote, replied that "one swallow does not make a summer," and that actual instances could probably be found of mistakes that Froude had fallen into. And so no doubt they could. My only contention is that justice never has been done him, and that he was loaded down unfairly from the first with a reputation for carelessness. The judgments, however, that time often renders in respects like these are as interesting as any judgments that are handed down to us in silence, and they often have all the dramatic features of what is anomalous and paradoxical. A good example of what I mean may be found in the case of Herodotus *vs.* his detractors. Macaulay, for instance, in his brilliant and interesting essay upon History, did not hesitate to pass the most sweeping judgment on the recognized father of this branch of literature. "At the distance of three and twenty centuries," he wrote, "we feel for him the same sort of pitying fondness which Fontaine and Gay are said

to have inspired in society. He has written an incomparable book. He has written something better perhaps than the best history; but he has not written a good history. He is, from the first to the last chapter, an inventor. We do not here refer," he goes on to say, "merely to those gross fictions with which he has been reproached by the critics of later times. We speak of that coloring which is equally diffused over the whole narrative, and which perpetually leaves the most sagacious reader in doubt what to reject and what to receive. The most authentic parts of his work bear the same relation to his wildest legends which Henry V bears to the *Tempest*."

Thus the great Macaulay on the careless and credulous Herodotus! Very steadily, however, since the words were written, the case has gone against the facile Englishman and in favor of the ancient Greek. Careful study and a wider knowledge of ancient times and people have gone, I believe, to show that much which was tossed aside as fiction in Herodotus was actual fact, while Macaulay's own history has gradually become discredited, because of its partisan judgment and its perpetual inaccuracy.

The fact of the matter is that there are two great kinds of history, and probably there always will be. The writing of history, in short, is not unlike the art of painting. In both great spheres there are distinct and opposing schools. There are the artists who make a science of detail, and there are those who make a science of *impression*, and neither school is ever wholly accurate, nor can it hope to be.

Now Froude was emphatically an impressionist and a color-schemist. He painted scenes in a vivid and expressive way, and he loved a dramatic situation. He made the most of a striking episode, and the only difference between himself and other writers lay in the fact that where others failed, or did but fairly well, he set a masterpiece before the reader's mind. Froude may have hated correcting proof, as Mr. Birrell has declared,<sup>4</sup> and he was doubtless careless in the copying of manuscript; but he had a veritable passion for digging into the records of the past, and he never wearied in his task of making real the men and women whom he found there. His *History* may live to be corrected, and

<sup>4</sup> Augustine Birrell, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 163.

his portraits to become retouched; but at least they are likely to live and to be remembered, which is more than can be said of the writings of many of those who delighted to abuse him.

From this digression, however, which has not been wholly vain if it has removed from our minds some portion of inherited prejudices, let us come back to our proper subject,—the preaching qualities of this historian.

Froude's theme, as we have seen, was the Protestant Reformation and the course it ran in England. His text was substantially this, that "the Reformation was the hinge on which all modern history turned." The Reformation, however, as he saw it, was no simple contest between rival creeds and dogmas; it rather was a wide revolt of the laity against the clergy, of the people against a corrupt and tyrannous form of government, of the human mind against restrictions on the native right of independent judgment. As his biographer, Mr. Herbert Paul, reminds us, Froude believed "the Church of Rome to have been the enemy of human freedom under British independence," and in his opinion the "reformers alike in England, in France, and in Germany were fighting for truth, honesty, and private judgment, against priestcraft and ecclesiastical tyranny." He knew too well, from what he had himself been taught, that "the reformers had been calumniated," and it seemed to him that "their services were in danger of being forgotten, and that the modern attempt to ignore the Reformation was not only unhistorical but disingenuous." In this belief he was very far from being alone. Visitors to Oxford will remember that one of the most beautiful of its many striking memorials is the martyrs' monument, opposite Balliol College, near the place where Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were burned. The monument, which was designed by Sir G. G. Scott, was erected in 1841, and was intended as a public dissent from the disparagement which had been cast by the leaders of the Oxford movement on the work and influence of the English reformers. It stands there as a witness, raised by scholars and lovers of historical justice, to the worth of men who had laid down their lives in devotion to a mighty cause. What was accomplished there in bronze and marble, Froude undertook to do in literature, and his History is equally a monument in honor of the martyrs,

and likewise of the countless men and women, known and unknown, who bore the brunt of the mighty battle for freedom of thought and for national religious independence.

It would be idle to undertake to claim for Froude what he never undertook to claim for himself,—an absence of prejudice. “I do not pretend,” he wrote long after his *History* had become a classic, “to be impartial. I believe the Reformation to have been the greatest incident in English history; the root and source of the expansive force which has spread the Anglo-Saxon race over the globe and imprinted the English genius and character on the constitution of mankind.” In this respect again he meets in the fullest way the demands of the Gentle Reader. “I have had enough of this,” says Mr. Crothers, in his inimitable way, as regards one of our modern scientific historians who has no sympathy and ventures to express no judgments. “I have had enough of this,” referring to the Civil War in England. “What I want to know is, what it is all about, and which side on the whole has the right of it. Which side are you on? Are you a Roundhead or a Cavalier? Are your sympathies with the Whigs or the Tories? . . . It’s all in confidence; speak out as one gentleman to another under a friendly roof! What do you think about it? No matter if you make a mistake or two, I’ll forget most that you say anyway. All that I care for is to get the gist of the matter.”

Now that is just what Froude did. He spoke out. He said what he thought, and he gave the gist of the entire matter in graphic and most forceful words. He saw distinctly that the question which was fought out after the fall of Wolsey and finally settled by the defeat of Philip’s Great Armada was the question whether England should be bond or free, stagnant or progressive, decadent or resurgent. In the great struggle which ensued before that question was finally settled, men took opposite sides, and took them with a will. Some of the best men of that day, or of any day, took the wrong side, while certain other men whose influence and character never had been rightly weighed, distinctly took the right side. So Froude at least believed. And he not only said so, but he set himself to prove it, and very happily the events of history were on his side. The facts bore out his

theory, and the right men and the nobler principles secured the victory which has never since been lost. There can be no doubt that he went too far in acting as the champion of Henry VIII. He would have accomplished more in this direction, as John Fiske well declared, "if he had not tried to do so much." It was a mighty thing, however, to accomplish anything at all, and whether the better and the truer view was suggested to him by Carlyle or not is a matter of very little consequence. The fact remains that what Carlyle himself accomplished in so great a way for Cromwell, his friend and disciple accomplished in a smaller way for a much less noble and attractive character. It was impossible to whitewash Henry completely; but it was much, at least, to set him in a whiter and a clearer light.

We have seen what Froude's text was, and what the general subject of his long discourse. It now remains to consider how he developed and carried through his theme, and what the special truths were that he took delight in emphasizing.

1. Chief among such truths was the value and the surpassing might of vigorous and independent manhood. Like Carlyle, to whom the early volumes of the *History* were referred for criticism and advice, Froude dearly loved to deal with men, and more especially with men of action,—men who did things and engaged in great heroic feats. These were the kind of men which his native Devonshire had produced in great abundance, and in youth he had been fed upon the tales of what they mightily accomplished. Moreover, he freely accepted the dictum, and worked upon it, that "history is the quintessence of many biographies." He believed that history is essentially a drama and that to be written successfully it must be written in dramatic fashion. A drama, however, depends upon the movements and positions, the beliefs and undertakings, of its actors. It peoples the stage with living men and actual women. In accomplishing this Froude was assisted by his marvellous imaginative powers. He was possessed of insight; that is of historical insight. He had the faculty, without which true history never can be written, of living in the age with which he dealt. He touched elbows with the people of past times and succeeded to a wonderful degree in seeing with their eyes and thinking their thoughts. He was with a boat-

man in his wherry on the Thames that summer afternoon when the "thunder cloud drew down over London, and the storm broke which destroyed St. Paul's." Amidst the roar of the thunder he saw a jagged line of lightning "touch for an instant the highest point of the proud cathedral. Pale tongues of fire flickered out into a coronet of light, and very soon the whole spire, the envy of the Christian world, from the tower wall to the summit, was a gigantic pyramid of flame."

At another time, with three hundred knights and gentlemen, he had been admitted to the hall of Fotheringay Castle to witness the execution of the unfortunate Mary Stuart. He sees her as she descends the great staircase to the hall, leaning on the arm of an officer of the guard. "The tables and forms had been removed," he notices, "and a great wood fire was blazing in the chimney. The Queen of Scots as she swept in seemed as if coming to take part in some solemn pageant. Not a muscle of her face could be seen to quiver. She ascended the scaffold with absolute composure, looked round her smiling, and sat down."

At still another time, he was with the monks in the chapel of the Charter-house when they prepared themselves with unobtrusive nobleness to die. Not less beautiful "they seemed to him in their resolution, not less deserving the remembrance of mankind, than those three hundred who in the summer morning sat combing their golden hair in the passes of Thermopylae." He could not "regret their cause, as there *is* no cause for which any man can more nobly suffer than to witness that it is better for him to die than to speak words which he does not mean."

There are those among historians who make it clear that what they care for most is the idle gossip of history,—the trivial events, the passing superstitions, the thoughts and sayings of the stable, the kitchen, and the court. Others, again, and among them the greatest and most searching writers, are interested more especially in social and industrial conditions and the slow development of thought. But Froude, in the first chapter of the first of his twelve long volumes, made it reasonably clear that his chief concern was to be with the sturdy men of his native land and the deeds they sturdily performed in fighting for religious freedom. In this respect he

reached a climax when he came to tell the story of the mighty naval duel between Spain and England, in which Drake, and Hawkins, and Sir Walter Raleigh sailed forth to destroy the clumsy but almost countless vessels of the cruel Philip. It was just the kind of theme that suited best the genius of this brilliant descriptive writer, for Froude was a sailor from his youth, and loved the sea as he loved nothing else, unless it were his native Devonshire.

It was not by chance that an older brother made himself one of the foremost naval authorities in England, for the Froudes were a boating family, and the opportunity was near at hand, as the River Dart flowed near the door of the quiet rectory, while the sea was not far off. Even the ritualistic Hurrell could not resist its charm, and he complained in his diary that the thought of it distracted him beyond measure in his prayers. "Do you remember," he wrote Keble, "the southwesterly waves roaring round 'the Prawle' after our stern, and the little crisp breakers that we went through when you cruised with us off Dartmouth harbor?" This passion for the sea, however, was strongest of all with the youngest of the brothers, and he once wrote to a friend that his "highest realization of human felicity would be to wander round the world in a hundred-ton schooner."

With passionate fervor, therefore, as well as intimate knowledge of the elements with which he dealt, he wrote the graphic story of the famous sea-fight, and through it all you feel the breezes as they blew across the swaying decks and fanned the cheeks of those mighty men who sailed from Plymouth Harbor to fight the battle of their Queen. It was no wonder that when the story had been told the historian felt his task was finished. It was the crowning feat of sixteenth-century manhood; or, as he himself expressed it, "It was the sermon which completed the conversion of the English nation and transformed the Catholics into Anglicans."

2. But if Froude believed above all things else in manhood and preached the need and value of strong and resolute and fearless and liberty-loving men, he also believed in a power that is superior to men and women and orders their affairs. Although his faith in early life had undergone a shock, and, guided by the teachings of Carlyle he lost his hold on dogmatic religion, he



never ceased to believe in the presence of a Higher Power which guides men in their work.

"Justice and truth," he once declared, "alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may be long-lived; but doomsday comes to them at last, in French Revolutions and other terrible ways." To him there was, if men would only listen, "a Voice forever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong." It came to be his task as an historian to interpret the accents of that voice, and to spell the words it spoke in a mighty human crisis. "Religion," he explained in one connection, and the words are very strikingly a preacher's words,— "Religion is the attitude of reverence in which noble-minded people instinctively place themselves towards the Unknown Power which made man and his dwelling-place. It is the natural accompaniment of their lives, the sanctification of their actions and their acquirements. It is what gives to man in the midst of the rest of creation his special elevation and dignity. Accompanying our race as it has done from the cradle of civilization, it has grown with our growth, it has expanded with the expansion of knowledge, subject only to the condition that when errors have been incorporated into religious systems, they have been exceptionally tenacious of their ground. Rituals and creeds have become so priceless when once accepted that it has been held sacrilege to touch them. They have been guarded by superstition and sealed against change by anathema. The eternal nature of the Object of our reverence has been attributed to the forms under which it has been adored, and, unable notwithstanding to escape the changes which the development of knowledge imposes upon it, religion has advanced, not by easy and natural transitions, but by successive revolutions, violent leaps, spasmodic and passionate convulsions. Piety, the twin brother of science, tends at such times to be the guardian of error. Love of truth is forced into unnatural hostility with the virtue which is only second to it, and then come those trying periods of human history, when devotion and intelligence appear to be opposed, and the metal of which men and nations are composed is submitted to a crucial test. Those who adhere at all costs to truth, who cling to her though she lead them into the wilderness, find beyond it a promised land where all that they sacrificed is restored to them."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Volume xii, pp. 535-6.

3. As these words suggest, with the emphasis they lay upon the dangerous tenacity of ritual and creed, the religion which Froude believed in and proclaimed was a religion of toleration and kindness. History taught him, and he used the facts of history to proclaim, the dangers of departing from that "pure religion" and undefiled of trust and love, of reverence and mercy, which was set forth in the gospels. "Such a creed," he declared in one connection, "had it remained as it came from its Founder, would have changed the aspect of the earth. . . . It would not have quarrelled over words and forms. It would have accepted the righteous act whether the doer of it preferred Paul or Cephas. In that Religion hate would have no place, for love, which is hate's opposite, was its principle; nor could any cruel passion have found its sanction where each emotion was required to resolve itself into charity.

"But the rules of life as delivered in the Gospel were too simple and too difficult. . . . God gave the Gospel, the father of lies invented theology. . . . By their fruits ye shall know them. Through Christ came charity and mercy. From theology came strife and hatred, and that fatal root of bitterness which the Lord spoke Himself in the mournful prophecy, that He had not come to send peace on earth, but a sword. When His name and His words had been preached for fifteen centuries, there were none found who could tolerate difference of opinion on the operation of Baptism, or on the nature of His presence in the Eucharist; none, or at least none but the hard-hearted children of the world. The more religious any man was the more eager was he to put away by fire and sword all those whose convictions differed from his own. The Reformation was the beginning of a new order of things."<sup>6</sup>

Those are biting and sarcastic words; and they are the words of a man whose heart and conscience were aflame with the tragic facts of intolerance and bigotry, and who wished to proclaim these facts from the pulpit page of history.

4. Again, however, and even more conspicuously, he believed in freedom,—freedom of thought, freedom of action, and freedom of religious worship. He believed in the thorough-going separation of church and state, and was never tired of laying

<sup>6</sup> Volume ix, pp. 301-3.

emphasis upon the obstacles and dangers of every form of ecclesiastical dictation. It is in this connection, much more, so far as I have found, than in any other, that he throws aside all possible disguise and preaches with persistent fervor. There can be no better instances of this than occur in the descriptive passages which tell of the martyrs' deaths at Oxford. What, for instance, could flavor more distinctly of the pulpit than the following: "Latimer was then introduced—eighty years old now—dressed in an old thread-bare gown of Bristol frieze, a handkerchief on his head with a night-cap over it, and over that again another cap, with two broad flaps buttoned under the chin. A leather belt was round his waist, to which a Testament was attached; his spectacles, without a case, hung from his neck. So stood the greatest man perhaps then living in the world, a prisoner on his trial, waiting to be condemned to death by men professing to be the ministers of God. As it was in the day of the prophets, so it was in the Son of man's day; as it was in the days of the Son of man, so was it in the Reformers' day; as it was in the days of the Reformers, so will it be to the end, so long and so far as a class of men are permitted to hold power, who call themselves the commissioned and authoritative teachers of truth."<sup>7</sup>

The same characteristics vividly appear when the death of Cranmer is described. Biblical allusions came almost as easily and naturally to Froude's mind as they came to the mind of Ruskin, and he used them with the preacher's freedom. "So perished Cranmer. He was brought out, with the eyes of his soul blinded, to make sport for his enemies, and in his death he brought upon them a wider destruction than he had effected by his teaching while alive. Had they been contented to accept the recantation, they would have left the Archbishop to die broken-hearted, pointed at by the finger of pitying scorn; and the Reformation would have been disgraced in its champion. They were tempted, by an evil spirit of revenge, into an act unsanctioned even by their own bloody laws; and they gave him an opportunity of redeeming his fame, and of writing his name in the roll of martyrs. The worth of a man must be measured by his life, not by his

<sup>7</sup> Volume vi, p. 383.

failures under a single and peculiar trial. The Apostle, though forewarned, denied his Master on the first alarm of danger; yet the Master who knew his nature in its strength and its infirmity, chose him for the rock on which He would build His Church."<sup>8</sup>

I could give other instances where, between his graceful periods and sweeping sentences, we catch clear echoes of the pulpit. But I content myself with these.

And so we leave this prince among the men who have aided history in the truths it cannot help but preach. Often hasty in his judgments, mistaken doubtless in certain of his statements, and swayed by prejudices which he took small pains to hide, he none the less was always brilliant, stimulating, and instructive in his treatment of the things concerning which he wrote. It has well been said of him that "Whether for felicity of diction or for vividness of presentation, he belongs indisputably to the company of the Immortals." Because he considered the presentation of facts almost as important as the facts themselves, and gave in smooth and interesting words the substance of some dull and dry original, it has been assumed of him unfairly that he was careless in his methods and indifferent to "the accidents of truth." But the principle which he laid down for himself at the outset of his work, and the ideal to which he struggled to be true, lacked nothing either in soundness or in height. "It is not," he wrote at the close of the first volume of the *History*, after clearing the ground for his discourse, "it is not for the historian to balance advantages. His duty is with facts."

<sup>8</sup> Volume vi, pp. 429-30.